



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Pinedale Field Office

P.O. Box 768

Pinedale, Wyoming 82941-0768

In Reply Refer To:
1310 (100)

December 12, 2003

Dear Interested Party:

BLM officially opened the scoping period for the Jonah Infill Drilling Project (JIDP) with publication in the *Federal Register* on March 13, 2003, of a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an environmental impact statement and of a potential amendment to the Pinedale Resource Management Plan. The scoping period remains open for receipt of comments and new information until the draft environmental impact statement is released for public review and comment.

Since March 13, 2003, BLM has received substantive new information which has been included in a revised development proposal from EnCana Oil & Gas (USA) Inc. and as a connected action proposed by BLM. This information was presented at a public meeting on November, 13, 2003, in Pinedale, Wyoming. The JIDP EIS process is still in the scoping phase. The connected action and revised Proposed Action are within the scope of the EIS project and impact analyses. BLM believes the public should have an opportunity to comment on the new information as presented in the revised Proposed Action and connected action. Therefore, BLM is actively soliciting public review and comment on this new information. If you have submitted comments previously you may wish to modify those, or you may want to provide new or additional comments based on the revised Proposed Action or the connected action or both.

Original Proposed Action

- Up to 1250 new wells from up to 850 new wellpads
- 40 wellpads per section (1 wellpad every 16 acres)
- Downhole wellbore spacing varying from 20 acres to 10 acres (already approved by WOGCC)
- Wellpad facilities, access roads, gathering pipelines, water wells, etc.
- Exploration activity in previously-unexplored formations

Revised Proposed Action

- Up to 3100 new wells
- Up to 16,200 additional acres of initial (drilling phase) surface disturbance from construction of wellpads and associated facilities
- Minimum of 64 wellpads per section (1 wellpad every 10 acres)
- Downhole wellbore spacing varying from 20 acres to 5 acres (already approved by WOGCC)
- Wellpad facilities, access roads, gathering pipelines, water wells, etc.
- New ware-yard, and expansion of existing compressor stations
- Development of new/expanded water disposal facilities

- Drilling at a rate of 250 wells per year
- Exploration activity in previously-unexplored formations
- Upgrade the Burma Road from its intersection with Highway 351 to the Jonah Field
- Applicant-committed measure to establish a Cumulative Impacts Mitigation Fund to implement off-site mitigation opportunities

Connected Action

- Modify the JIDP boundary to include the north half of Sect. 23, T28N, R109W because of the high potential for development in this area

The new information and revised alternatives are included in an attachment to this letter. The alternatives and the new information are available on our website at <http://www.wy.blm.gov/pfo>.

Your written comments can best be incorporated into the impact analysis if received by BLM on or before January 16, 2004. Written comments should be mailed to Jonah Infill EIS, BLM-Pinedale, PO Box 768, Pinedale, WY 82941. Comments can be submitted electronically to pinedale_wymail@blm.gov. Faxed comments will not be accepted without prior arrangement with either the Planning Team Leader or Field Manager.

For further information, contact Carol Kruse, JIDP Planning Team Leader, BLM-Pinedale Field Office, 307-367-5352 or carol_kruse@blm.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Prill Mecham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "M".

Prill Mecham
Field Office Manager

NEW INFORMATION and DRAFT ALTERNATIVES SUMMARY
for the
JONAH INFILL DRILLING PROJECT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
(12/12/03)

All alternatives except No Action will consider 100 acres of surface disturbance for exploration of unexplored formations.

Analysis for all alternatives will include the north half of Section 23, T28N, R109W as a similar action. That half-section shares common geography with the Jonah Field and has a high potential for further development. Thus, it will be included in the reasonably foreseeable development for this EIS to facilitate future development of that half section. For the sake of the analysis, this similar action will increase the Project Area from approximately 30,200 acres to approximately 30,500 acres.

Development of ancillary facilities, including but not limited to a new ware-yard, expansion of existing compressor stations, and new/expanded water disposal facilities will be considered under various alternatives.

All alternatives except No Action will consider some degree of upgrade of the Burma Road from its intersection with Highway 351 to the Jonah Field, to allow additional Jonah Field access from the northwest.

All alternatives except No Action and the Revised Proposed Action will consider development of the Jonah Field at rates of 75, 150, and 250 wells drilled per year.

Alternatives A through D differ in levels of surface disturbance and other impacts (such as emissions) and in the density of surface disturbance.

All alternatives will consider existing unreclaimed wells and other surface disturbances in the area as part of the existing environment. Existing surface disturbance is included in the surface disturbance estimates presented below.

Mitigation opportunities, including adaptive management and/or off-site mitigation, will be considered either as part of the Revised Proposed Action and various alternatives (e.g., applicant-committed environmental protection measures) or as required/potentially required mitigation measures in the EIS.

Some of the alternatives or their components identified below may be considered but modified or eliminated if, during impact analysis and/or EIS preparation (including public comment), it is determined that they are redundant with other alternatives or components, are infeasible from an environmental, technical, safety, or economic standpoint, and/or are otherwise impractical for the avoidance or minimization of adverse environmental effects. Furthermore, additional alternatives or alternative components may be added if they are determined to be reasonable for the purpose of this analysis

(e.g., fewer or more wells or disturbance, slower or faster development rates, staged development).

Life of Project (LOP) is that period extending from potential project authorization through completion of adequate reclamation.

The alternatives currently identified for detailed analysis are:

No Action Alternative – 533 wells from 497 well pads. Well density = 1 pad/40 acres (16 pads/section). As generally identified in the Modified Jonah Field II Project environmental assessment, estimated total initial surface disturbance is approximately 14% of the field; the estimated LOP surface disturbance is approximately 5% of the field.

Revised Proposed Action Alternative – Up to 3,100 new wells on up to 16,200 new acres of initial surface disturbance. Well pad density = a minimum of 64 well pads/section, or 1 pad/10ac. Drilling rate = up to 250 wells per year. Estimated total initial surface disturbance is approximately 67% of the field; estimated LOP surface disturbance is approximately 20% of the field.

Alternative A – Up to 3,100 new wells from the existing 497 well pads (drilling from 1 to 8 additional wells/pad; well pads would have to be expanded to accommodate additional [directional] wells). Well pad density = 16 well pads/section, as currently authorized. The estimated total initial surface disturbance is approximately 24% of the field; estimated LOP surface disturbance is approximately 10% of the field.

Alternative B – Up to 1,250 and/or 2,200 new wells from up to a maximum of 1,250 and/or 2,200 new well pads, respectively. No well pad density restrictions. The estimated total initial surface disturbance ranges from approximately 36% to 52% of the field; estimated LOP surface disturbance ranges from approximately 11% to 16% of the field.

Alternative C – Up to 3,100 new wells on: up to 266 new well pads (16 well pads/section); up to 1,028 new well pads (32 well pads/section); and 2,553 new well pads (64 well pads/section). Estimated total initial surface disturbance ranges from 25% to 58% of the field; estimated total LOP surface disturbance ranges from 8% to 17% of the field.

Alternative D – Will analyze that level of additional surface disturbance that would be consistent with the existing reasonably foreseeable development analysis identified in the current Pinedale Resource Management Plan (RMP), and will further assess the consistency of this level of development with current RMP management objectives.